

**MASKS OF DECEPTION:**  
**CORPORATE FRONT GROUPS**  
**IN AMERICA**

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## INTRODUCTION

An October 18, 1991 article in the *New York Times* titled "Court Lets 'Baby Bells' Branch Out," quotes the Alliance for Public Technology and identifies the group as "a Washington-based association representing educators, the disabled, the elderly, and other groups that favor quickly expanding the availability of information services." In fact, APT is a corporate front group, set up by the Bell companies to push government to allow the regional telephone companies access to a multi-billion dollar information services markets. Real consumer groups oppose allowing the regional bells access to this market, fearing market concentration in communications.

About a related decision, the *Washington Post* reported that "Some consumer groups saw the ruling as the first step toward putting advanced communications technology in the hands of ordinary people. 'At long last, ordinary consumers... will have a better chance to participate in the information age,' said Phillip Mink, general counsel for Citizens for a Sound Economy."<sup>1</sup>

The *Washington Post* did not describe Citizens for a Sound Economy (CSE) as anything but a "consumer group." In fact, according to Gene Kimmelman, legislative director of the Consumer Federation of America, "CSE is definitely a corporate front group. They take the administration's line and very much the Bell telephone companies' line on just about everything."<sup>2</sup>

A September 1, 1991 front page *New York Times* article titled "Experts Question Staggering Costs of Toxic Cleanups," reports that "environmental experts" are questioning whether the government's program to clean up hazardous waste dumps is worth the \$300 to \$700 billion costs. The environmental experts told the *Times* that it wasn't worth the cost. And who exactly were these environmental experts? Tom Grumbly, who the *Times'* reporter identified as an "environmentalist who is president of Clean Sites, a non-profit organization in Virginia that advises communities on hazardous waste cleanups."

Actually, Grumbly, as he himself pointed out in a September 11, 1991 letter to the *Times*, does not represent an environmentalist constituency. Clean Sites is a corporate front group, concerned about the costs to its sponsors of toxic cleanups.

Every day, groups with deceptive sounding names, groups that represent major American corporate powers, are seeking to convince journalists and the American people that the groups represent something other than the usual corporate interests.

The reason is simple -- it's easier to believe disinformation when the disinformation is coming from an apparently disinterested party.

The rise of corporate front groups in America is a recent phenomenon, a direct response to the burgeoning consumer, citizen and environmental movements. Before these movements took hold in the late-1960s, big business corporations delivered their messages through their traditional lobbyists in Washington. The names of these old fashioned corporate lobbies told the stories -- Beer Institute, National Coal Association, Chamber of Commerce, American Petroleum Institute.

But as public interest groups began to win widespread public support, it became clear that new mechanisms were needed to deliver the corporate message.

Thus, if Burger King were to report that a Whopper is nutritious, informed consumers would probably shrug in disbelief. If Anheuser-Busch were to report that a beer a day could lead to a happier life, consumers might see this as another attempt to sell beer. And if the Nutrasweet Company were to insist that the artificial sweetener aspartame has no side effects, consumers might not be inclined to believe them, either.

But if the "American Council on Science and Health" and its panel of 200 "expert" scientists reported that Whoppers were not so bad, consumers might actually listen. If the "Health Education Foundation," headed by Dr. Morris Chafetz, were to report on "The Good of Alcohol," beer drinkers might be less reluctant to cut down on drinking. And if the "Calorie Control Council" reported that aspartame is not really dangerous, weight-conscious consumers might continue dumping the artificial sweetener in their coffee every morning without concern.

Increasingly, big business corporations are creating "front groups" to influence legislators, the media, and America's consumers. These corporate front groups advertise, hold conferences, publish newsletters and reports, write editorials, and appear on talk shows in an effort to sway public opinion toward the industry viewpoint.

This study attempts to examine this trend by profiling a number of the more misleading and influential front groups in America today.

We used a number of different criteria in determining what, exactly, qualifies as a corporate front group.

Often, a scientific-sounding name is the most effective tool for peddling an industry position on an issue. This method is employed by many of the chemical and nuclear power companies. Examples include the Council for Agricultural Science and Technology, the American Council on Science and Health, and the Information Council on the Environment. Contrary to their names, these groups often disregard compelling scientific evidence to further their viewpoints, arguing that pesticides are not harmful, saccharin is not carcinogenic, or that global warming is a myth. By sounding scientific, they seek to manipulate the public's trust.

Another tactic is to use a name which indicates a general concern for the public interest. Organizations which utilize this tactic sound like they are "environmentally sensitive" or are "consumer advocates," when they are primarily concerned about their own collective bankbooks. The National Wetlands Coalition, for example, which uses the logo of a duck flying blissfully over a swamp, is hardly fighting for wetlands preservation. And Consumer Alert fights adamantly against government regulations concerning product safety -- which is hardly in the consumer's best interest. By using these names, groups are attempting to garner respect for themselves by riding on the backs of the true environmentalists and consumer advocates.

In several instances, front groups use "buzzwords" in their names which are immediate tip-offs to questionable motivations. Words like "sensible," "responsible," and "sound" indicate probable corporate backing. These reserved terms tend to downplay the severity of environmental dangers such as acid rain and ozone depletion by implying that admitting and confronting these crises would not be sensible, responsible, or sound.

When an average person reads about Citizens for Sensible Control of Acid Rain, she may take the name at face value, assuming the group is mostly comprised of citizens wishing to curb acid rain. In fact, the group's membership list includes no individual citizens.

Finally, there are the groups that simply have innocuous-sounding names which give no indication of the group's ties to business. These groups have names which may even reveal their true agenda. However, because the name does not indicate corporate sponsorship, the real motivation for the agenda is not made clear. For example, the American Tort Reform Association is pushing for the reform of state tort law to benefit the association's business and corporate members. Why, then, did the group's founders decide not to include in the name the words "industry," "business," "corporation," or "company"?

Apart from the name, three variables -- funding, control, and membership -- determined an organization's classification as a front group. Usually, all three are exclusively corporate. Often, a group will purport to have high grass-roots involvement in one of these areas to give an air of authenticity. However, excessive corporate participation in any one of the three categories qualifies an organization as a front group.

Some organizations can be considered pure industry fronts. These were initially established and remain entirely funded by corporations in one industry. The Council for Solid Waste Solutions, for example, was conceived, created, and remains funded and controlled by plastics manufacturers wishing to improve their public image. The Council is nothing more than an amalgamation of plastics industry corporations.

People for the West!, on the other hand, is funded and controlled by mining companies, but has a significant roster of individual members. Miners and loggers certainly have a vested interest in securing their jobs, so it is no wonder that they join this organization, which has a pro-mining and pro-timber agenda. However, because People for the West! is heavily funded and controlled by large mining and timber companies, its qualification as an industry front is no less significant, despite its grass-roots membership.

Tobacco and alcohol corporations, like the mining and timber companies, also tend to set up "grass-roots" organizations -- in this case, to fight for lower excise taxes and pro-smoking and drinking legislation. These groups -- such as Smokers' Rights, People United For Friendly Smoking, and Beer Drinkers of America -- are funded heavily by industry, and the members are actually used as pawns by corporations lobbying for pro-industry legislation which will greatly increase their profits. Members of these organizations are often sent letters written by the front groups which they are then asked to sign and send to their Congressional representatives. As the *Journal of American Insurance* points out, "Some legislators do not like to see big dollars rolling at them. Grass-roots efforts. . . tend to lessen this problem, because legislators like to hear from their constituents when voting on controversial issues."<sup>3</sup>

The final criterion for a front group is its agenda. Each of the corporate groups included in this study takes a pro-industry position on virtually every issue it faces. But the majority attempt to hide this fact with a purported agenda which almost never mirrors their real one.

Most groups provide the public with a noble "mission statement," insisting on their legitimacy as "public interest" organizations. For example, they may claim that their true intentions are to balance environmental and economic interests, but their actual motivation is less admirable. The Alliance for Responsible CFC Policy, made up of companies which

produce and utilize ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), is a classic example of this false nobility. The Alliance asserts that its main goal is to "ensure that the establishment of reasonable government policies regarding the further regulation of CFCs be pursued on an international basis and be based on sound scientific facts,"<sup>4</sup> but its true concern is its collective bottom line.

While some groups, such as the CFC Alliance, state purposely ambiguous goals, others are outright deceptive. The Council for Agricultural Science and Technology, funded and controlled largely by chemical companies, maintains that it "takes no advocacy stance on issues."<sup>5</sup> It claims to be an unbiased research group of scientists which studies the safety of pesticides, food irradiation, and other controversial issues. However, like the other groups included in this study, the Council takes a pro-industry position on virtually every issue it faces.

It should be noted that not every front group is initially established by corporations; in many cases, individuals provide the impetus for a group's formation. Often, however, groups with corporate agendas subsequently receive funding largely from corporations, eventually transforming them into corporate front groups. The founders of such groups may continue to assert their independence from corporate influence, but in fact they are rarely pure ideologues and almost never stray from the viewpoints of their industry financiers. Dr. Elizabeth Whelan may have created the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH), but since her group argues for the safety of sugar substitutes, caffeine, food dyes, and pesticides, the manufacturers of these unhealthy products provide the majority of the group's funding. Therefore, we consider ACSH an industry front group.

In compiling our research for this study, we also decided that it was important to include several influential organizations which one might not ordinarily consider corporate "front" groups. When one thinks of institutions such as the National Legal Center for the Public Interest or the National Right to Work Committee, "corporate funding" may not immediately spring to mind. But in scrutinizing these groups and comparing them to our front group criteria, we found a near-perfect match.

The three institutions we chose to include -- NLCPI, the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, and the Pacific Legal Foundation -- all receive substantial corporate and business revenues. They are also heavily controlled by corporate executives and have agendas which are beneficial to the business interests that support them. Because these groups are extremely well-established, their opinions are often respected by the public, the media, and legislators. Rarely does anyone question their legitimacy as independent, public interest institutions, but a close examination of their operations brings their validity as unbiased organizations into question.

On the other hand, some groups which are primarily funded and controlled by corporations have not been included in this study, since their agendas do not necessarily benefit their funders directly or they are more ideologically oriented. Examples include the Right to Life network and U.S. English, which lobbies to make English the official language of the United States. (This group makes a point of hiding its revenue sources. As one U.S. English spokesman put it, "We won't tell because we don't have to."<sup>6</sup>) Also included in this category are the right-wing think tanks, such as the Heritage Foundation, Hoover Institute and Accuracy in Media. While these groups are heavily influenced and funded by corporations,

they seem more interested in pushing an ideological agenda.

Front groups tend to focus their activities on lobbying, public relations, or a combination of both. The groups which focus on lobbying tend to be more transient. The Coalition for Vehicle Choice was created by auto makers to lobby against federal legislation which would increase the current corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standards from 27.5 to 40 miles per gallon. Similarly, oil companies have created the Coalition for American Energy Security to push for legislation allowing for more oil drilling in Alaska.

Historically, other groups have come and gone. The Clean Capital Cities Committee was formed in 1987 to fight a mandatory bottle deposit law in Washington, D.C. The group, which was created by beverage companies, bottlers, and grocery stores, dismantled when it succeeded in defeating the bill. And the Clean Air Working Group, which battled the Clean Air Act of 1990, dispersed upon the bill's passage. The group was the creation of several coal companies and spent millions of dollars in its attempt to thwart the clean air legislation.

Most other front groups which do not focus solely on legislation have been created as public relations arms for industries. These groups are used by corporations which have an inherent need to better their public image in order to remain profitable -- cigarette manufacturers, alcohol distributors, producers of ozone-depleting chemicals, producers of hazardous waste, oil drillers, and others. This can be accomplished in one of three ways.

The first of these is to downplay the environmental or health concern with which they are associated. In convincing people that pesticides are not harmful, for example, a front group can say with more credibility what its chemical industry supporters cannot. Similarly, the coal industry's Information Council on the Environment produces advertisements claiming that global warming is a myth. Since the coal companies are partly responsible for the crisis, they themselves could not downplay the problem as credibly as a front group.

Industries also gain credibility by using a completely different approach. Some corporations admit to the potential dangers of their products and try to convince consumers that they are working to eliminate the problem. They create front groups to show off their "green" or "politically correct" agendas on issues such as solid waste and alcohol abuse. For example, Keep America Beautiful, funded primarily by beverage bottlers, makes a big show of correcting the nation's solid waste problem with extensive anti-litter campaigns. However, the group does not acknowledge the option of passing mandatory recycling laws as a possible solution, since this would decrease their sponsors' profits. And some alcohol industry front groups feign concern for the dangers of excessive drinking yet promote the continued "responsible use" of alcohol.

A third tactic is to form groups which claim that there are no economically feasible solutions to the problems for which their corporate creators are responsible, or that the continuation of their dangerous practices are truly in the public's economic interests. Usually corporations are only concerned with the economic costs that they themselves would suffer. The Alliance for Responsible CFC Policy claims that replacing chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), HFCs), and HCFCs with more environmentally sound non-halocarbons would not be cost effective or beneficial to society, when actually making this switch would only be costly for the Alliance's chemical company sponsors.

There are certain clues to the fact that an "alliance," "coalition" or "council" might be a corporate front group. Many public relations front groups are so blatant about their

dealings that they simply operate out of the offices of a public relations firm, with employees of the firm often acting as directors. This is also true of many of the lobbying front groups, given their transient nature. Other groups work out of the law offices of the firms that act as their counsel. And still others are located in the same offices as one of their larger corporate or trade association supporters. The Alliance to Keep Americans Working, an anti-labor coalition of 90 business organizations, illustrates this point. It lists the same phone number and address as that of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to using a public relations firm or high-powered law firm, in many cases, there is another clue to a group's status as a front. Some groups include top corporate executives on their boards -- a less covert way to get across industry opinions. Keep America Beautiful, for example, includes representatives on its board of directors from Mobil, Caterpillar, Anheuser-Busch, Pepsi, Philip Morris, Dow, Coca-Cola, and Proctor & Gamble. And of the ten board members of Living Lakes, nine are either the president, chairman, and/or CEO of a major power company.

Front group boards of directors, in addition to consisting of CEOs and presidents of major corporations, often include directors of other front groups. Barbara Keating-Edh, the president of Consumer Alert, is also a director of Beer Drinkers of America. And Elizabeth Whelan, who heads the American Council on Science and Health, is a board member of Consumer Alert. This list represents only a sampling of the inter-group connections we found among our 36 front groups.

Front groups are not limited to one particular industry or issue. They are used by tobacco corporations and nuclear power companies alike, by mining interests and asbestos manufacturers, by the National Association of Manufacturers and the Arctic Slope Regional Corporation.

Industrial corporations are a main cause of environmental pollution. Therefore, front groups involved with such issues proliferate. We have included in this study groups which attempt to counteract the furor over ozone depletion, wetlands preservation, solid waste, global warming, and acid rain.

Many of the environmental issues causing corporations to become concerned involve the issue of safe energy sources. The United States depends on energy for almost every aspect of daily life. Yet finding sources of energy to heat our homes, run our cars, and light our office buildings is becoming increasingly complicated. Though some have looked to domestic oil as a solution, many people are concerned about the effects more drilling will have on the environment. And accidents such as the 1989 Exxon Valdez spill have not made the case for oil any more enticing. Another option, coal, has been criticized for the fact that burning it emits carbon dioxide, which contributes directly to global warming and causes acid rain. A third possibility, nuclear energy is looked on by many corporations as a solution to these problems, but critics site the "chronic problems of safety, cost, management, and disposal of radioactive wastes."<sup>7</sup> Finally, the use of dams to generate hydropower is destructive to rivers and the ecosystems within them. At this point, according to Scott Denman of the Safe Energy Communication Council, the only viable options are "energy efficiency and renewable resources, such as solar, wind, geothermal and biomass, [which] are the safest, cheapest, cleanest, most affordable energy resources for the United States in the 1990s and beyond."<sup>8</sup>

Mining and logging companies wish to continue their practices with as little governmental regulation as possible, but the public is becoming increasingly concerned over the impact these operations are having on the environment. "Wise use" has become the term used by such corporations who insist on the importance of continuing to dig for and cut down America's natural resources. The "wise use" movement has gained the support of many of the miners and loggers themselves, who are concerned about the security of their jobs. Therefore, many of the "wise use" organizations which have appeared in recent years have true grass-roots support. In addition to these mining and logging interests, "wise use" has been embraced by individuals who use public lands for recreation -- riding motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles.

Some corporations have taken advantage of the "grass-roots" "wise use" movement to further their own ends and have created "wise-use" front groups. Mining and logging companies have been joined by motorized vehicle corporations such as Honda and Kawasaki to help the movement pay its way. Because the movement has garnered so much grass-roots support, we chose not to include groups such as the Blue Ribbon Coalition (funded in part by Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki, and Yamaha), Communities for a Great Northwest, the Wilderness Impact Research Foundation, and Center for the Defense of Free Enterprise. However, one group, called People for the West!, is so blatant in its exclusive corporate funding and control that we did include it in the study.

Apart from the environment, corporations often find themselves grappling with public concerns over personal health. It is becoming increasingly difficult to convince consumers to eat junk food, smoke cigarettes, and drink alcoholic beverages. The public has also become concerned about controversial practices in agriculture, such as the use of pesticides, food irradiation, and corn hybridization -- all of which have been shown to pose health dangers. Corporations in each of these areas have used front groups to regain confidence in their products. The tobacco and alcohol corporations have faced particular difficulty in pushing their products. In 1988, cigarette smoking is estimated to have killed 434,000 people.<sup>9</sup> With recent studies showing second-hand smoke to be the cause of 50,000 of these deaths,<sup>10</sup> legislation to ban smoking in many public places has become a heated issue. Because such legislation could prove costly for tobacco companies, corporations like Philip Morris and R.J. Reynolds have drummed up the "smokers' rights" issue, contending that smoking bans are "unconstitutional." The dozens of national and regional smokers' rights groups which have sprung up around this issue, because they are created and heavily funded by tobacco corporations, are nothing more than fronts for the industry.

The alcohol industry has faced similar threats to its profits. In 1987, alcohol-related deaths in America climbed to over 100,000, the estimated cost of alcohol use to the American economy the following year was \$120,000,000,000, and Congress found that "the most abused drug in America is alcohol."<sup>11</sup> Because of these staggering costs, the alcohol industry has created front groups to oppose such legislative measures as a requirement to place warning labels on all alcoholic beverages (which has since been enacted), increased alcohol excise taxes, and possible bans on TV advertising. The industry's image problem has also been caused by the nationwide campaign against drunk driving begun in the mid-1980s, and the general "Just Say No" sentiment which has been extended to the use of alcohol as well as illicit drugs. Alcohol industry front groups have attempted to curb this sentiment by allaying

fears about drinking.

Unlike tobacco and alcohol-related health issues, consumers cannot choose to avoid such health hazards as pesticides and herbicides in their food supply. However, potentially carcinogenic chemicals used in agriculture can be regulated by the government. To discourage consumers from insisting on legislative action curbing such practices, chemical companies and agribusiness associations have created the "scientific" front groups. These groups insist that pesticides such as Alar are safe and that practices such as food irradiation are necessary. And while they may insist on their unbiased "review" of controversial agricultural issues, they are usually just propagandists for chemical companies.

In general, the existence and bargaining power of labor unions, as well as the police authority of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), are thorns in the side of corporate America. Front groups are thus created to lobby against increased OSHA regulations (Workplace Health and Safety Council) and legislation which would ban the use of permanent replacement workers during a strike (Alliance to Keep Americans Working), to generally decrease the power and influence of labor unions (National Right to Work Committee), and to reassure workers, stockholders and the public about safety in the workplace (National Safety Council). These groups are created and funded by some of the largest business and industrial organizations in the country, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, and the U.S. Business and Industrial Council. Furthermore, each of the labor-related front groups has a purported agenda which is remarkably unlike its actual one.

Corporations also create front groups to promote a variety of governmental and economic policy changes which would increase their profits. These groups, which need to appear unbiased in order to be credible, and thus influential, are particularly careful about not disclosing their corporate support. They tend to utilize citizen membership lists to keep their credibility high, but in fact, their boards of directors are almost exclusively made up of top corporate executives, and their funding is highly corporate as well. Their agendas rarely stray from industry points of view. The front groups comprising this category have fought for a variety of issues including free trade, state tort reform, no-fault insurance, deregulation of the telephone companies, and income tax reform, to name a few. These organizations are usually highly influential, as they are rarely suspected of being voices for corporate America.

Finally, there are groups which have such widespread agendas that they fit into no specific category. They deal with environmental issues, labor laws, and economic policies alike. These groups are not necessarily just the think tanks and legal foundations; other examples include Consumer Alert and Citizens for a Sound Economy. While the front groups in this category deal with numerous, diverse issues, their influence in each particular area is nonetheless substantial.

While the list of issues that has spurred the creation of front groups (environment, personal health, labor, the economy) seems comprehensive, there are, in fact, powerful industries which have not found it necessary to utilize such groups. In our research, we examined the gun and defense industries in search of front groups and found little evidence of a trend in these areas.

Though it seemed probable that gun manufacturers would set up fronts to defeat recent legislation such as the Brady bill, which has imposed a five-day waiting period in the

purchase of firearms, the National Rifle Association itself seems to have performed most of the lobbying in opposition to such legislation. While smaller groups, such as the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, have also battled such legislation, they do not seem to be funded by gun manufacturers.

The defense industry, which has also avoided the use of front groups, has enjoyed a political climate which has posed little threat to its profits.

While these industries have not seen a need to use front groups, certain individual corporations have also been forthright in their public relations campaigns. A recent public relations campaign by Texaco, which uses the slogan "Let's put our energy into saving it," clearly identifies that corporation as the producer of the advertisements. Similarly, when Congress was recently considering increased excise taxes for beer, the Beer Institute produced an extensive ad campaign with the slogan "Can the beer tax." Like Texaco, the Beer Institute clearly named itself as the ads' producer. Both of these organizations, however, are not always so innocent, as they have been major contributors to a number of front groups as well. One must wonder, then, why they are only up front on occasion.

One might expect, as we did, that some corporations are involved in more than one front group. In fact, a computer search of corporations listed more than once revealed that three -- Dow, Exxon, and Chevron -- contribute to nine or more of the groups profiled in this study. (See Appendix)

## AMERICAN SMOKERS ALLIANCE

*"The antismoking groups have funding. We don't fund the smokers' rights groups. It's been our policy. If we were to fund smokers' rights groups and bring them to Washington, wouldn't they then be viewed as an arm of the tobacco industry?"*

-- Brennan Dawson, spokeswoman for the Tobacco Institute<sup>1</sup>

*"We now know that it's not going to be a self-starting, genuinely heart-felt citizen reaction, it's really going to be an industry-sponsored, industry orchestrated movement."*

-- Texas State Rep. Jeff Wentworth, on so-called "smokers' rights" groups<sup>2</sup>

Philip Morris knows that Americans treasure freedom. So in response to ever-increasing legislative action to permanently ban smoking from airplanes, restaurants, and offices, Philip Morris and the other four major U.S. tobacco companies -- R.J. Reynolds, Brown & Williamson, Lorillard, and American Brands -- took this idea and rolled with it. They created the "smokers' rights" movement, now under the umbrella of the newly-formed American Smokers Alliance, to get legislators to quit meddling with America's right to smoke.

The tobacco industry is no novice when it comes to influencing legislators. In California, Philip Morris and R.J. Reynolds alone spent over \$3,000,000 on lobbying and campaign contributions in an effort to defeat growing anti-tobacco industry sentiment in the state legislatures around the country. A 1991 report by Drs. Michael Begay and Stan Glantz found that 93 percent of California's state senators and assemblymen received money from the tobacco industry last year, with an average contribution of nearly \$3,000.

While America's tobacco companies have been key players in molding politicians' opinions on tobacco bans, they realized a few years ago that they were fighting a losing battle. Even the ultraconservative American Council on Science and Health, a group which has come to the defense of caffeine, saccharin, and the use of carcinogenic pesticides, concedes that smoking is the one health issue on which they cannot come to industry's defense while still retaining any sense of legitimacy.

With time running out, the big tobacco companies stumbled on a concept which they have used as a last resort to keep their heads above water. This concept is that "smoking is a basic human right." To impede on that right is "unAmerican," they say, and violates the Bill of Rights. Building on these ideas, R.J. Reynolds, for example, sent representatives to 230 communities across the nation to drum up support for their new "grass-roots movement." So-called "smokers' rights" groups suddenly proliferated, usually insisting that they receive no support whatsoever from the tobacco industry.

But according to George Jennings, an investigative reporter from WOAI radio in San Antonio, who was able to infiltrate an RJR meeting, smokers are actually instructed to deny any affiliations with RJR to give the illusion of legitimacy. "Reynolds is to be kept out of it, the media to be told that smokers have formed their own group and would go to the wall for their right to puff," Jennings said.<sup>3</sup>

Angela Mickel, director of Tobacco Free America's legislative clearinghouse, also sees through the tobacco industry's ploy. "The tobacco companies are going out there trying